

Kitchen hood and exhaust cleaning

Take a professional approach when adding this service to your company's diversification services.

By **Jon A. Barrett**

Kitchen hood and exhaust cleaning is an excellent complementary add-on diversification for your company's existing cleaning services.

This service helps prevent fires in the restaurant/food industry sector and helps promote clean indoor air quality.

Certified training on kitchen hood exhaust cleaning should be obtained by the owner and technicians.

There is training available that is similar to what you are familiar with, such as with the Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration Certification (IICRC).

Some of these training, certification and support organizations include the International Kitchen Exhaust Cleaning Association, the National Air Duct Cleaners Association and the Indoor Air Quality Association.

This type of training, certification and support will distinguish your company from non-certified companies, and you will have a marketing edge.

Necessary equipment

Your kitchen hood exhaust cleaning equipment should include several important pieces.

The equipment should include a van or a truck, perhaps with a tow-behind trailer for additional cargo space.

An industrial/commercial, high-temperature pressure washer is your main tool. You need a quality, reliable machine. The right choice in PSI and heat will enable you to perform your work effectively and rapidly.

A waste-water capturing device is required by the EPA Clean Water Act for proper disposal of waste-water generated during the cleaning.



Fiberglass extension ladders for access to the roof and fiberglass A-frame ladders for the interior work are necessary. Fiberglass extension poles with magnetic scrapers will be required in order to properly remove grease and particulate build-up from the exhaust shafts and ductwork.

Standing and portable floodlights are needed for night work and for hard-to-see areas.

As a company owner you need to protect yourself and your technicians from any mishaps at a commercial facility.

You will need to purchase commercial liability insurance, workers' compensation and possibly bonding.

Procedures for cleaning

Performing kitchen hood exhaust cleaning requires several important procedures.

The first and most important procedure is safety.

Proper grounding of your pressure washer, extension cords, lighting, proper lock-out/tag-out documentation, slip and fall prevention, high reach and



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harness protection, confined space awareness and possible cutting access ports into ductwork are some of the safety concerns with OSHA regulations.

Donning proper personal protective equipment (PPE), including safety glasses, disposable gloves, protective suits and non-slip resistant boots are essential basics.

Preparation is one of the most critical procedures of kitchen hood exhaust cleaning.

Proper preparation will contain spills and will alleviate a possibly unhappy customer.

Preparation materials will include poly plastic for protecting your customers' equipment and contents. The poly plastic will also serve as a containment barrier for any spills or mishaps.

Trash can containers can be used to collect the waste water. Hinge clips or fasteners are applied to the poly plastic, and then placed onto the hoods and exhaust shafts lower end to capture the waste water.



Your pressure washer will be your main tool and will enable you to perform great work in the least amount of time.

Kitchen hood exhaust cleaning involves three main parts of equipment to clean. These include:

- Rooftop exhaust fan
- Vertical and/or horizontal exhaust shaft ductwork
- Hood.

The hood is considered the easiest — and the last — part of the cleaning procedure.

The rooftop exhaust fan and the vertical and/or horizontal exhaust shaft ductwork should be cleaned in conjunction with the hood for a complete system cleaning.

A complete system cleaning may require installation of high-temperature rated access doors.

The actual cleaning and removing of

grease and particulate build-up will consist of several cleaning techniques and methods. Cleaning and removal of the grease and particulate build-up should be performed to the NFPA 96 Standard for Ventilation Control and Fire Protection of Commercial Cooking Operations.

Hand removal and scraping might be required as a first step. Chemical degreasing and/or foam degreasing would be a second step.

High-temperature pressure washing would be a third step.

A final dry, hygienic wipe-down would be a final step and can be included in your post cleanup.

Marketing your services

Adding kitchen hood exhaust cleaning is like any other diversification.

You need to market your new service and convince potential commercial clients of the benefits your company can offer them. One obvious benefit that can't be ignored is fire prevention in kitchens.

A good practice as you get started is to document your work with digital photographs.

You can use these as powerful marketing tools for new business and can also use them as training tools for new technicians.

Think of other marketing methods that have worked for you and you will no doubt find that many of them will work for this type of service as well.

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Be prepared for working in some tight spaces, depending on the type of hood and exhaust system. Safety always comes first, which means proper PPE.